

# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

## PUBLIC STATEMENT

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### **Brazil: Cases of violence in the Brazilian electoral context must be investigated considering the possibility that they could be hate crimes**

Amnesty International is concerned by the rise in the number of violent incidents that have been reported in various Brazilian cities during the electoral period. Cases covered by the press and recounted on social media or websites set up to gather information about violence in the context of the elections show that many attacks may have been hate crimes, motivated by discrimination on grounds of race, gender, sexual orientation or gender identity, or because of a political opinion.

Amnesty International urges the Brazilian authorities to act promptly and with due diligence to ensure that violent attacks in the electoral context are investigated promptly, independently and impartially, and that those responsible are brought to justice. The investigations must consider the possibility that such cases could be hate crimes motivated by the real or perceived identity of the victim or their association with a given group or political opinion.

“It is the responsibility of the authorities to take steps to prevent, investigate and punish hate crimes committed by any person. With the increase in reports of people being attacked in a context of growing intolerance of difference and political opinions in this electoral period, it is essential that all cases are promptly investigated and that possible discriminatory motivations behind those crimes are considered,” affirms Jurema Werneck, Executive Director of Amnesty International Brazil.

To date, there has been one reported case of murder in this context. Moa do Catendê, a capoeira teacher, was stabbed to death on 8 October in Salvador (Bahia) following a discussion about the presidential elections during which he declared his support for one of the candidates. The attacker, who disagreed with his opinions, has been arrested and the police have been taking statements from witnesses. The information that has been released about the case suggests that the killing was politically motivated.

Amnesty International has also noted that candidates standing for public office in these elections have been making statements that are contributing to an atmosphere of intolerance and could, in some cases, amount to advocacy of hatred, inciting violence and discrimination. As a state party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the American Convention on Human Rights, Brazil has an

obligation to implement the necessary measures to combat any form of discrimination, including on the grounds of political opinion.

“In this worrying context of growing intolerance and polarization that we are currently seeing in the country, it is important to remind the authorities of Brazil's international commitments. The country's commitment to human rights can't be merely on paper; it must translate into concrete actions. At this crucial time, the Brazilian authorities must not shirk their duty to combat incitement to hatred and discrimination and must take measures to protect the rights to freedom of expression and non-discrimination,” asserts Werneck.

The second round of voting for Brazil's new president and state governments is scheduled for 28 October. The country's authorities at all levels must take action before and after the elections to prevent hate crimes motivated by discrimination. The public authorities, political parties and candidates must publicly condemn any incitement to hatred, discrimination and violence, and send a clear message that crimes directed against people for discriminatory reasons will not be tolerated.

“All Brazilians have the right to participate in the electoral process without being subjected to any kind of coercion, discrimination or retaliation by anyone, and the authorities must guarantee the protection of their physical and mental integrity. People must be able to walk down the street without fear of being attacked simply because they belong to a certain group or express a certain opinion. It is the role of the authorities to guarantee this. It's essential for the political parties and candidates to publicly communicate to the general population and to their support bases that violence against political opponents must stop,” concludes Wreck.

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